

including rare earth elements, veterans employment, and surplus military equipment.

Ms. Grasso joined the CRS as a permanent staff member in 1998. She is the author or co-author of more than 30 CRS reports on a wide array of defense-related topics associated with weapon systems acquisition, defense contracting, the evolving defense industrial base, outsourcing of defense functions, contract competition, domestic material sourcing, and sealfit. Her works were widely read by congressional clients and contributed directly to the CRS' mission of informing the legislative debate. I served as co-chair on the House Armed Services Committee's 2012 Panel on Business Challenges within the Defense Industry. Valerie provided direct support to that panel and her insights and analysis were essential to the panel's work.

Valerie was also a long-time member and officer of the Congressional Research Employee Association (CREA), the collective bargaining organization representing the interests of those working at the CRS. She served on the CREA board for nearly a decade, from 2004–2013, where she was a member of the telework committee and the CREA bargaining team. In 2013, she was elected Vice-President of CREA, and for the last two years of her career she served as CREA's President. She has also been recognized for her work with the Library of Congress chapter of Blacks in Government.

I ask my fellow Members to join me in applauding Valerie Bailey Grasso for her lifelong commitment to supporting the nation and this body and in wishing her a long and enjoyable retirement.

#### HONORING LGBTQ LEADERS IN THE TWIN CITIES

#### HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 7, 2016*

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the transgender, queer, lesbian, bisexual, and gay members of my community as we begin celebrating Pride. Every year, Twin Cities Pride selects outstanding leaders to helm the celebration. The 2016 Grand Marshals are Roxanne Anderson and D Rojas, and the Lifetime Champions of Pride are Minnesota Representative Karen Clark and Minnesota Senator Scott Dibble.

Both Grand Marshals have a long history of LGBTQ advocacy in the Twin Cities. Roxanne's dedication spans four organizations noted for their dedication to the most underserved segments of the community. Through providing healthcare access to trans individuals at the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition, leading trans and racial justice initiatives at OutFront Minnesota, organizing trans and queer musicians of color at RARE Productions, and employing and serving the queer community at Café SouthSide Roxanne is one of the hardest-working and most effective trans advocates anywhere in the country. D Rojas is the president of Dykes on Bikes Minneapolis, a lesbian motorcycle club noted for its inclusivity. The group hosts dozen of events throughout the Twin Cities annually, attracting hundreds of LGBTQ participants. In recent years, D has escorted Minneapolis

Mayors Betsy Hodges and R.T. Rybak on her motorcycle at the Pride Parade.

The 2016 Lifetime Champions of Pride are highly effective leaders in the Minnesota Legislature who have worked extensively on equality. When Representative Karen Clark was first elected to the Legislature in 1980, there were only a few out elected officials nation-wide. Throughout her time in office, she has achieved countless successes for the LGBTQ community: including "Sexual Orientation" in the Minnesota Human Rights Act, expanding housing and healthcare for HIV positive individuals, and promoting social and economic justice. She is the longest-serving lesbian legislator in the U.S. Senator Scott Dibble became involved in politics in the mid-1980s, inspired to fight for the civil rights of the LGBTQ community. Since his election to the Senate in 2002, Senator Dibble has helped pass the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the Safe and Supportive Schools Act, and numerous transportation and transit plans. Representative Clark and Senator Dibble were instrumental in gathering popular support to defeat the anti-marriage ballot amendment in 2012. Their tireless advocacy to engage Minnesotans culminated in the successful effort to legalize marriage equality statewide in 2013.

Twin Cities Pride also recognizes the contributions of organizations that are creating a more equitable and inclusive world. The Community Champions of Pride are the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition, TransForming Families, and Out & Sober Minnesota.

Since marriage equality has become the law statewide and nationwide, some people hung up their coats and thought, "We're done!" As almost anyone in the community can tell you, that is absolutely not the case. LGBTQ individuals, and especially trans folks and people of color, face disproportionately high rates of homelessness, health issues, discrimination, and income insecurity. In order to achieve true LGBTQ equality, we need to continue focusing on the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, income, immigration status, and other identities that highlight the despicable disparities in our state. I am proud these honorees have continued to fight on behalf of communities routinely excluded from advocacy or glossed over in public policy. They each demonstrate that when we stay engaged, when we turn out—we win. In the era of bathroom bills and legalized discrimination, it's more important than ever to make our voices heard—in the ballot boxes, in the halls of Congress, and beyond.

#### HONORING MR. GARY HARRISON FREER

#### HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 7, 2016*

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Mr. Gary Harrison Freer for his courageous service to our country. Commander Gary Harrison Freer joined the United States Navy on March 12, 1967 after graduating from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

After completing Aviation Officer Candidate School and earning the Navy "Wings of Gold,"

Commander Freer was designated a naval aviator and qualified pilot of military aircraft. He requested training in the A-4 Skyhawk and in August of 1969 joined the attack squadron, VA-22, also known as the Fighting Redcocks aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Bonhomme Richard*. Commander Freer had an impressive flight record that logged 2,397 hours of military flight, carried out 103 missions in Vietnam and recorded 212 day and night carrier takeoffs and landings. Commander Freer finished his active duty in April of 1972, but served fifteen more years in the Reserves before transferring to Retired Reserves in December of 1989. Commander Freer was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Vietnam Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea) and the Vietnam Campaign Air Medal S/F-9.

Humbly, I echo the words of President Ronald Reagan, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we will always be free." And humbly, I offer my sincere gratitude to Commander Gary Harrison Freer for his service and acts of bravery that allow us the freedoms we enjoy today.

#### KIYLEE VALDEZ

#### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 7, 2016*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kiyilee Valdez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Kiyilee Valdez is a 12th grader at Warren Tech North and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kiyilee Valdez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kiyilee Valdez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

#### CELEBRATING BENTLEYVILLE BOROUGH'S BICENTENNIAL

#### HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 7, 2016*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bentleyville Borough in Pennsylvania on its momentous achievement of reaching 200 years of existence.

Beginnings were humble for Bentleyville 200 years ago, when Sheshbazzar Bentley started selling lots of land in the beautiful Monongahela Valley for as little as 45 dollars. His original posting advertised "Bentleysville" as being surrounded by rich country, and having on site three wool machines, one gristmill,